



### **Hiking through the Table Mountain National Park**

***“Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors and discover the beauty of an ancient mountain chain . . . “***

**The Trail** is a spectacular five-night, six-day, 100km trail that hikes the wilderness line along the spine of mountains from Cape Town to Cape Point, or vice versa. It offers a hiking experience rivaling that of the Otter Trail in the Tsitsikamma National Park or the legendary Inca Trail in Peru.

**Booking:** hikers can book three, two-day, one-night hikes, as sections of the overall trail which is still under development. The full trail, with five overnight stops, will be completed by June 2010 and can then be hiked in its entirety.

Alternatively if you simply want the experience of sleeping in the beautiful tented camps you can book the accommodation and then use the tented camp as a base for exploration – a guide is mandatory.

- All bookings are for a minimum of 6; and maximum of 12.
- Trail price – R 490.00 p/p for two full days and one night.
- Sleepover price – R 350.00 p/p – in @ 14h00 and out @ 11h00.

**The Trail** - The construction of **the Hoerikwaggo™ Trail** by four hundred previously unemployed path-builders over four years, saw the TMNP proclaimed by lamp-post billboards as a “Mountain of Jobs”. Some of the best of these path-builders are now your mountain guides and interpret the natural and cultural wonders of the Trail, others have become porters, tourism staff and rangers.

Acclaimed for opening up access to what was once private or restricted land, the Hoerikwaggo™ Trail is a progress indicator of land consolidation of the 10 years young national park. The change of land ownership from private to public, allows you to walk freely in the footsteps of our ancestors who once walked these “mountains in the sea”.

**Cultural & Natural History** - Hoerikwaggo is the indigenous Khoekhoen word for Table Mountain, meaning “mountains in the sea”. The dramatic mountains indeed rise out of the sea on three sides, and on the fourth side the mountains tower majestically over the growing urban sprawl of metropolitan Cape Town. The Cape Peninsula is rich in the first peoples’ history of the past 100 000 years when the nomadic Khoekhoen and San hunted and gathered on these mountains and beaches, then herded in a subsistence lifestyle that touched the earth lightly. The mountains oversaw the arrival of the Nguni people 3 000 years ago, and then the Europeans 300 years ago. Today Table Mountain protects the resulting mixture of cosmopolitan citizens in a custodian role known as “Umlindiwengizimu” – the watcher of the

south – placed by Qamata – our creator – looking after all of Africa.

**Trail** takes you through the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom, the smallest and richest in diversity of the world's six plant kingdoms and the only one to be declared a World Heritage Site. Walk in the wonderfully diverse fynbos, the forests and the rocky, sandy coastlines of the south-western tip of Africa.

Three of the five overnight tented camps are open for hikers:

- Orange Kloof above Hout Bay,
- Silvermine below Noordhoek Peak, and
- Slangkop Point, near the Kommetjie Lighthouse.

The last two tented camps are under construction, one above Smitswinkel Bay near the entrance to Cape Point and one at the SA Navy's former Signal School above Simons Town.

**The Tented Camps** - The beautiful, rustic but luxurious camps, cater for both local and international visitors, and are built from timber felled and milled in the TMNP. Following the principle of touching the earth lightly, only previously damaged sites were selected, and the design ensures minimum environmental impact. Hot water, open fires, and fully equipped kitchens.

### What You Need

All the trails are portaged, guided and self-catered. Food and overnight gear will be ferried from your departure point to your tented camp. You need good walking boots, a daypack with lunch, snacks and two litres of water and weatherproof gear for sun, wind and rain.

**The Slangkop section of the Hoerikwaggo™ Trail** - Starts from the Big Tree along Red Hill road, close to Signal School above Simons Town and traverses the Peninsula from east to west, ending at the Kommetjie Lighthouse 12 km away. Guests overnight in the Slangkop tented camp, 100m from the sea at Kommetjie.

**Day 1:** Easy - 12km - Redhill to Kommetjie. The hike meanders between the summit of Red Hill, past Ocean View and down over Slangkop to Kommetjie. Along the way are breathtaking views of Table Mountain and Cape Point.

**Day 2:** Tough - 21km - Kommetjie to Silvermine - longest day of the whole Hoerikwaggo Trail. From Slangkop tented camp along Noordhoek and Long Beach beach. Look out for Oyster Catchers, Cape Clawless otters and, sometimes, whales and dolphins. Climb the tough Chapman's Peak then Noordhoek Peak with magnificent views of the sea and the mountain range.

**Meeting Points:** Hikers meet the *Hoerikwaggo guides* at the big tree along Red Hill Road and the trail ends at the end of day two at the Silvermine dam car park.

**Vehicles:** Hikers may arrange with the booking officer to park their vehicles as follows: one at Signal School offices and one at the Silvermine mountain bike parking area. Hikers must make their own arrangement to collect their vehicles at the end of the trail.

**Alternative:** If you simply want the experience of spending a night in a tented camp next to the sea, then book the accommodation and use it as a base from where you can enjoy all the

Silvermine outdoor activities. A guide is mandatory.

### **The Silvermine section of the *Trail* -**

This spectacular one-night, two-day hike traverses Long Beach past the coastal wetlands, climbs over Chapman's and Noordhoek peaks to overnight at the Silvermine tented camp in the upland mountain wetlands near the Silvermine Dam. The next day takes you to Constantia Nek.

**Day one:** Tough - 21km - Starts at the Slangkop tented camp near the Slangkop Lighthouse in Kommetjie along Noordhoek and Long Beach beach. Look out for Oyster Catchers, Cape Clawless otters and, sometimes, whales and dolphins. Climb the tough Chapman's Peak then Noordhoek Peak with magnificent views of the sea and the mountain range.

**Day two:** 15km – Tough - Walk down Blackburn ravine and traverse northwards above Hout Bay then climb indigenous fynbos mountain side over Vlakkenberg to Constantia Nek where your two-day getaway comes to an end.

**Meeting points:** Hikers meet the Hoerikwaggo guides at the Slangkop Lighthouse parking area and the trail ends at Constantia Nek.

**Vehicles:** Hikers may park their vehicles at Orange Kloof by making prior arrangements with the booking officer. Hikers must make their own arrangements to be dropped off at Slangkop Lighthouse. At the end of the trail hikers will walk to Orange Kloof to collect their vehicles.

### **Minimum 6; maximum 12 hikers**

**Alternative:** If you wish to simply experience spending a night on the mountain, book the accommodation and use it as a base from where you can enjoy all the Silvermine outdoor activities. A guide is mandatory.

### **The Orange Kloof Section of the *Trail* -**

Forest and mountain experience: Overnight in a tented camp in the ancient Afromontane forest of Orange Kloof. Enjoy the pristine Orange Kloof forest before hiking out the Kloof up Disa Gorge and onto Table Mountain.

**Day 1: Tough - 15,5km** - Starting at the Silvermine Dam the trail descends Blackburn ravine then winds north through unspoilt fynbos with stunning views of the Cape Peninsula, and traverses Constantiaberg and climbs Vlakkenberg to Constantia Nek. Overnight camp in the Orange Kloof forest.

**Day 2: 9,5km – Medium** - Ascend the back table via Disa Gorge and walk through the Valley of the Red Gods to the upper cableway station. Hikers are ferried down by cable car and the trail ends at the lower cable station

**Meeting Points:** Hikers meet the HKT guides at the entrance gate parking area to the Silvermine dam and the trail ends at the lower Cableway station, Tafelberg Road, Cape Town.

**Vehicles:** Hikers may make prior arrangements with the booking officer to park their vehicles at the Platteklip Wash House in Cape Town. No vehicles are allowed to be left at the starting point so hikers must make their own arrangements to be dropped off.

**Alternative:** If you don't want to hike the trail, book the tented camp as overnight accommodation. A guide is mandatory.

### **Please note:**

- The Hoerikwaggo™ Trail Guides are fantastic interpreters of the natural and cultural wonders of the Trail. In addition the Hoerikwaggo™ Trail Guides are there to ensure your safety, the good conduct of hikers, permitted access where required, and appropriate use of facilities. Hikers are obliged to accept the guidance and advice of the Hoerikwaggo™ Trail Guides.

- Leave only footprints and take only photos. Picking flowers is strictly prohibited.
- Paths are there to protect the delicate fynbos ecosystem. Please do not walk off paths.
- Please do not feed the animals.
- Security: All overnight facilities have permanent on-site management and security.

Guides are and in radio contact with Park officials at all times.

- Touch the earth lightly: All facilities and infrastructure are designed with minimum environmental impact. Where possible we have used alternative energy sources and eco-toilets.

- Fires are only allowed in designated fire areas under the supervision of a Hoerikwaggo™ Trail guide. Outdoor fires will only be lit on green (low fire-risk) days.

- Escape Routes - All trails have alternative routes should the weather turn foul. Each escape route is as enjoyable as the primary route although possibly less challenging.

For more information and contact details see [here!](#)

If you have more information, corrections or your own experience in this place, please post it below!

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